DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 182 016 PS 011 158

AUTHOR Wardle, Francis
TITLE PACER Model: Education for Democracy [and] Meetings and Student Control.
PUB DATE 78
NOTE 19p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Alternative Schools; Educational Philosophy; Elementary Education; Elementary School Curriculum; *Elementary School Students; Governance; *Humanistic Education; Instructional Staff; Learning Activities; *Open Education; Playgrounds; Program Descriptions; *Student Government; Student Role

ABSTRACT

This document presents a program description of Pacer School, a free school in its fifth year of operation in Kansas City, Missouri. The first part of the paper, entitled "Education for Democracy," describes how the school got started, staff background and role, finances, curriculum, activities, physical environment and playground design and equipment. The second part, entitled "Meetings and Student Control," focuses on educational philosophy and student-centered governance. Much of the discussion is anecdotal and conveys a sense of the qualities of the school's social and physical environments. (JMB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

PACER MODEL

Francis Wardle
3507 Jefferson St.
Kansas City,
Mo. 64111

ED182016

Education For Democracy

Bridget runs through the open door, asks Karen to help her, and then races down the back stairs and across the grass. She and Karen check to see if Quack, the pet duck, is alright. Bridget has just arrived on Monday morning at PACER School. After she plays with Quack- who has really become the school mascot - she comes back inside with Karen and settles into a game of RISK with Paul and Judy, one of the teachers.

Bridget is a gregarious nine year old with short erect pig-tails and a constant, effervescent grin. She is one of the 30 students , age 5 through 11, who attend PACER SCHOOL, a non-public school in Kansas City, Missouri.

While Bridget plays and other students take off their coats and start into an activity, Trell swings the door open grandly and marches into the room - greeting his friends with utmost importance. He then grabs hold of Chris and they both race outside where they climb onto the wooden platform and ride down the pully.

Later Trell comes indoors and gravitates to the area where felt pens are arranged, and he sits down to work with them. Bridget is still playing RISK - actually she is winning.

Judy calls, "Meeting time", and all faces look at the clock (just to make sure its 9:30). By this time all the students have arrived. Bridget and the older students go down stairs for their meeting, and Trell and Chris go into the Little Kids' Room for theirs.

PACER School was started four years ago. It was created by parents in the Shawnee Mission School District of Kansas City, Kansas, whose initial idea was to develop a program of open education in that district. The district refused refused their detailed and well researched proposal, so they started PACER School. Initially located in Shawnee Mission, Kansas, the school soon had to move to a Kansas City location in Missouri.

PS011158

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Francis Wardle
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

because Kansas has strict regulations for private schools. Missouri has no regulations governing private schools. After meeting health , fire and building regulations the school was free to develop its own educational programs without interference from the state. Other states do have some form of regulations for their private schools, but these are often selectively enforced. Recently the Supreme Court of New Mexico declared that states regulations to be unconstitutional. (Before, New Mexico only enforced its Minimum Standards on schools they disliked.)

Starting its 5th academic year, PACER today is very similar in structure to the school initially created by the parents. It is essentially parent run, with the total parent body electing a board of 5 (parents and teachers) to recommend policies and program changes to the entire group. The parent group also elects a parent co-ordinator. The parents interview and hire teachers whom they feel can work well within the professed educational philosophy and climate. The teachers are all college educated, although not necesarily with education degrees. They are recruited from all over the country (Judy comes from Illinois, Sydney is from Kansas City, and the author was recruited from New Mexico.) Teachers have to believe in the philosophy, work well in the environment, and work long hours for less money than their public school counterparts..

The two meetings at PACER are in full swing as the students attempt to pass rules that will help them make the school the way they want it to be. Bridget complains that the Workshop is always a mess when it is time for the students to do their jobs at 2:30. The students discuss different solutions and one is put to a vote: anyone who leaves a tool out of the tool cabinet must stay out of the Shop for the rest of the week. Everyone votes, with each person having one equal vote. The new rule passes, and Bridget is satisfied. Judy then describes activities that have been planned for the rest of the day. The students sign up for a field trip.

Meanwhile Trell and the younger students discuss issues that concern them about the school.

Every morning at PACER School starts with a meeting. Sometimes problems are discussed and voted on; sometimes future field trips are described; often new or revised programs are detailed. Different students run the meetings, and always everyone has an equal vote. The students decide on rules and punishments to be used at school.

The two meetings have finished; all students gather to select their jobs- the students clean the school every afternoon at 2:30. The only set structure for the school day is the meeting in the morning, and the jobs in the afternoon--the rest of the day is structured by each student, according to their own needs, wishes and commitments.

This structure, and the other ideas that are implimented in the school, are a combination of the philosophy and guidelines set forth by the original parent group that started PACER, and the ideas and practices that have developed during the school's 4 year history. The initial thinking is written down in the form of the school's constitution and the original proposal developed for the Shawnee Mission School Board. These are still followed, with interpretation. It bases the school on humanistic, creative, individual and free-choise beliefs, with a strong leaning toward Summerhill and John Holt. Unlike many similar schools, PACER survived a strong disenchantment with these kinds of ideas, and is now as 'free' as it has ever been. This is because the school learn that freedom puts a great amount of responsibility on the students, and that students will not take responsibility for their learning, physical environment, and emotional environment if someone else does it for them. Teachers now help the students understand this responsibility; the teachers also let the students make important decisions.

PACER school building is divided into many learning areas. The well equiped wood Workshop is downstairs. Also downstairs is the Darkroom, Big Kids Room, Dance Room and office. The students decided that the downstairs is the noisey area of the school. The quieter area is upstairs, consisting of the Quiet Room (a library), Art Room, Little Kids Room, Lunch Room, and a large

room for science, math games and a drawing area. The Kitchen is also upstairs.

Bridget is in the Kitchen working with four other students and Sydney, a teacher. Her hands are in the dough as she mixes pastry for pizza, and follows the cooking directions that she and other students wrote out earlier. Every Monday some of the students cook a meal for the rest of the school. They decide the previous Friday what to cook, and then they bring in the ingredients on Monday. On other days students bring their own sack lunches, and eat whenever they wish.

Trell has just finished watering the seeds he planted in a wooden box that he made in the Shop. When the plants are big enough he will transplant them into the garden outside, which is part of an adventure playground. Trell now takes out his math book and works with Judy on his math.

At PACER students are exposed to as many interests areas as possible. We offer all the traditional subjects-- science, math, english, social studies, writing, art and gym-- plus geography, swimming, carpentry, traditional dance, drama, a whole gamut of art and craft activities, and photography; we go on field trips to industry, museums, colleges, city hall, ethnic celebrations, other schools, cemeteries, parks and attractive presentations in shopping centers; we bring in resource people to expose the students to other cultures, contemporary social issues, music, languages, and other children. When we go on field trips people at the event always express how well PACER students use the environment to find information and learn. When a student leaves PACER they have a vast knowledge of many areas, plus an important understanding of themselves-- what they enjoy doing, what they ~~try~~ try to avoid, and what they must make a special effort to attain. At PACER the student is free to choose their area of study and involvement. They learn because they enjoy learning; they seek out information because they are naturally inquisitive, and the school supports that inquisitiveness. They enjoy school.

One reason parents send their students to the school is because

of the great variety of activities that are offered. Another reason is because the students can work at their own speed-- finishing when they want to and changing when they wish.

Bridget likes this-- she says, "you can work at any grade you want to, you can get alot done if you want to." She can also work with younger or older students-- she can learn from students; she can teach others.

Trell's mother, Peggy Anderson, likes this too. She also is glad that Trell goes to PACER because,"... at PACER Trell is truely learning to live in a democracy...a real situation where the rules are made by the people they affect...the students learn to be responsible to themselves and their environment."

Peggy Anderson and the other parents must really want their children to go to PACER, because the school is totally financed and run by them. They must come to meetings to make decisions concerning the school; they must clean the school, they must hire the teachers, and they must continually develop fund raising projects to help finance the school. Not all the parents can afford to pay full tuition: Trell's mother is on welfare.

Financially the school runs on a basic monthly tuition, with wealthier parents paying into a sliding scale scholarship fund that is used for students of low income parents. Individuals not directly associated with the school also contribute to specific scholarship students. Fund raising activities are used to bring the incomming money equal to the school's expenses.

This arrangement requires a parent group of mixed financial resources and a great deal of time and energy. Many parents leave because of the extreme physical and emotional effort. The students that leave are re-absorbed into the public system with little problem-- sometimes they have to catch up in specific skills; but they have developed a strong self confidence and flexibility at PACER and soon excel in the traditional system, and in programs outside the school

Trell has a great deal of self confidence, which is evident when he is performing with other members of the PACER folk dance group. Trell works with the younger dance group. They have just

decided to have a practice, so they gather in the Dance Room. All the younger students really enjoy traditional folk dancing because they have watched the older students dance. The older group have performed dance shows in elementary schools, universities, shopping centers, old peoples' homes, television shows and programs outside Kansas City. The younger students also wanted to perform, so they learned dances, formed a group and presented programs in nursery and first grade programs.

The first dance they practice is a royalty dance from Sweden. Trell holds Chris's hand and they solemnly walk forward three steps, bow handsomely, and return to place. They repeat this, then joyfully skip through arches made by the other dancers, and finally swing each other off their feet. The dancers also practice a fast dance from Mexico, and a free moving one from Brazil.

Often after practice the dancers look at the big world map and point out where the dances come from.

"Lunch is ready! " All thirty students eat in the Kitchen, Lunch Room or outside (one of the rules). Trell and Chris sit on the playground platform to eat their food. They helped build the playground, which has transformed the bare backyard into a fun play and learning area.

It is similar to the European playgrounds, with the added element that the structures were built by the children (with my help). At the center of the play area an eight foot by eight foot square platform, seven feet high. A 60 foot pulley-run runs from a corner of the platform. The 30 foot slide is also attached to the platform. There are many different ways to reach the platform: a tire net, wooden ladders, ropes, and any way a child feels like trying. Its almost like a tree. A platform is built below the main platform, and a small one is built above. Also attached to the main structure is a rope swing. Accessible from the main structure, but on its own supports, is a small peaked-roof house, with windows and a door. It is three feet off the ground.

Other pieces of equipment include a home made teeter-totter, a long balance beam, a tunnel, and another small house.

The students helped a great deal in building the playground: mixing concrete, holding posts in place, nailing down pieces of wood, tightening nuts,and cutting boards. They also enjoyed using the block and tackle to raise the tire-net.

In the adventure playground there are also trees to climb and build on, a large concrete wall to draw and paint on, a sand box, a duck pen with two ducks, a pigeon cage with homing pigeons, an open ditch that sometimes contains water, and a garden. When we irrigate the garden (which is fairly often) the water runs through the irrigation ditches and into the open ditch, where the children make a dam and float their boats. Beyond this immediate area there is a larger flat field where games are played and the May Festival held.

The boats that the students float in the dammed up water, and the toy trucks and go carts that they test out on the asphalt, next to the school, are all built in the school Shop. Trell and Chris have just finished building boats, but these are too large to float in the backyard. They wonder aloud whether the boats will hold their weight, and realize that the only way to find out is to try them. So they ask if we can go on a trip to Loose Park, a nearby park that has a large lake.

Many of the students want to go on the trip, because many of them have boats they want to try out. Bridget decides to stay at school and read with her friend Diane.

While Trell, Chris and other students test their boats with Mark, a student aid, John, Bridget's brother, looks at the new buds on the trees and analyzes them. Paul is climbing a tree while Stephen tries to determine the depth of the water.

Mark and other students who come to PACER School from near-by colleges and universities work at PACER because they want experience in an alternative school, and because they want to be involved in a situation where they can work with students and try out educational ideas with them. At PACER we like to have new ideas in the school, and we like to have different adult models for the students. By the same logic we are concerned that our teachers offer different strengths and personalities;

we are especially determained to always have a male teacher.

"Hey Judy, Trell's fallen in!" Judy runs up and offers a hand to Trell, who declines, saying, "I can get out myself".

"How cold is it?" inquires Judy, enjoying the restrained grin on Trell's face.

"Oh, its hot", says Trell, tongue in cheek. Trell likes his teachers-- he climbs on them, he helps them when they need it, he feels free to disagree with them, and he learns from them. He knows they are people who try hard and care; but also people who sometimes make mistakes, and who are sometimes unfair. The teachers support the child's honest struggle to understand; they do not critize, moralize, or tell the student there is only one solution to a given problem. At PACER a teacher's job is very different from that of a traditional teacher. As Bridget says,"They are nice...one of them teaches dance to us...they get supplies for us like wood and games."

Human, warm, responsive teachers who react to children as individuals is another reason why parents send their children to PACER. They also want teachers to work individually with children when a child is naturally interested.

Like now--Trell wants to find out how long it will take for the wind to blow his boat across the lake. So Judy takes out the stop watch and together they time the boat.

Its time to go home. Soaking wet, Trell climbs into the bus, which the students finished painting a few weeks ago. They painted designs in orange, green, yellow and black. And they painted a big dragon. Now they feel the bus is theirs, just as they feel PACER School is theirs. The teachers continually help students to realize that the school is theirs- that they are responsible for what goes on at school, and what goes on in their own lives-- that they must take action when something goes wrong.

Trell- shirtless now, with his trousers rolled up to the knees, and his white feet gingerly hopping over the gravel- races down stairs to do his job in the Workshop.

Bridget has finished reading and is haveing a deep conversation with Alissa. Frissy- haired, upturned-nose Alissa always has

a very good reason for not doing her job. And Alissa can be very stubborn. Bridget, because she is checker, has to persuade Alissa to do her job. Checking used to be done by the teachers, but since the students have taken on that responsibility the jobs are being done better, and with less trouble.

Alissa finally finishes her job, and children begin to go home with their various car pools.

But Trell says to his mother as she comes into the building, "why did you have to come?I want to stay here!"

Francis Wardle
3507 Jefferson St.
Kansas City,
Mo. 64111

PACER MODEL

Meetings and Student Control

by

Francis Wardle

Student control is one of the main components of the PACER Model. Student control means that the students are expected to discuss and solve all problems that occure within the school and on field trips. They also must deal with confrontations between each other, and with adults in the school. The only areas within the school that the students do not have control over are safety areas (fire, health, road), legal areas, and how money will be spent. ~~in the school~~. It is very difficult to run a student controlled school because students do not want to take responsibility for their actions and non actions, because parents and other adults wish to be treated differently than students, because teachers like to be authoritarian, because parents often want the teachers to intervene and solve student problems, because all new students must unlearn the old system, and then learn the new one; and because any truely democratic process takes much effort. A school must have rules for all to function under in a reasonable way, and it must have means of enforcing those rules.

. For the PACER Model to work it is paramount that students solve their own problems and take responsibility for their actions, and the actions of their friends. The central mechanism for student control is the daily student meeting.

At 9:30 every morning (unless there is an early fieldtrip) we have the meeting. Usually the meeting is with all the students and staff (25 to 30 students, age 5 to 12, one to six or so teachers, aids and college students); but sometimes the older and younger students meet separately. Students sign up on a list if they wish to lead a meeting; once they have lead a meeting they cannot lead again for another six meetings (student rule). The leader controls the meeting by: recognizing the raised hand of a person who wished to speak, by telling students to move if the are disturbing the meeting by talking to a friend, by asking a student to leave the

PS 01158

meeting if she/he is being disruptive, and by adjorning the meeting. The leader of the meeting also must be consulted during the rest of the day if someone wishes to call another meeting to discuss and solve a current problem. Leadership of the meeting is considered a status position, and almost all students lead meetings, including the very young students, and the disruptive students. The young and disruptive younsters usually do a good job of running a meeting, but they can be disposed by a vote, and a new leader installed, also by a vote.

Adults at meetings (except those who just drop in once in a while) can discuss issues, and vote on solutions with the students. They have equal vote with a student.

Meetings are also used to talk about upcoming events, get lists for fieldtrips, or remind each other of rules that are already on the books. But the most important function of the meeting is to discuss problems, vote on solutions, and vote on ways to enforce the rule that has been passed. We feel it is essential that students vote on how their rule is to be enforced: a rule without a means of enforcement is really pointless. Subjects that come up in meetings to be solved run the gamut from someone throwing mud, buying candy on a fieldtrip, a child continually distroying another's project, and students' leaving their lunch on the lunch room table. Solutions for these problems that the students have decided on are: someone who throws outside must stay inside for the rest of the day; students can buy candy on fieldtrips so long as it does not delay the fieldtrip; the child who continually distroys projects will be asked to go home; and students who leave their lunches on the table might find them in the trash when they return. Simple majority votes are used to pass these and other rules.

Although the adults just have equal voting power with the students, and can be over voted on any issue, they really have a great deal of power - especially the teacher who heads the school. His (her) job is somewhat like that of a non-authoritarian group leader in a therapy group. He is a second leader to the real (student) leader. Like the position of a group leader in a group, the main teacher's job in a meeting is very strenuous. At PACER I

am the main teacher. As the main teacher in a student run meeting I must do many things: combine all the students suggestions for solving a problem into one workable solution that can be voted on; make sure everyone knows what is being discussed, and what is being voted (sometimes I introduce ridiculous ideas to vote on to keep the students aware of what is happening at the meeting); make sure a student who wishes to say something gets the chance; help the leader control vocal and powerful students; encourage students to think up solutions to the problem at hand; and suggest solutions or possible solutions if no one has an idea. I also have to keep the meeting moving - sometimes problems seem to have no solutions, but we cannot sit and stare at each other all day. I also try to explain the options that are being voted on, and the reasons for each option. Often students, when they suggest a solution to vote on, will give the reason why they feel it is a good solution; but sometimes I repeat what has been said - especially if a younger child shyly suggested it. I must also be aware of my power. Sometimes students will vote the way I do, so I wait until they have voted before I cast me vote; also, on many issues students will respect my opinion, and therefore vote with me. The fact that I am aware of my power does not mean that I will not use it. If I strongly believe in voting one way, I will say so, and try to persuade students to vote with me. Cases where I try to influence the vote include rules that limit the power of ego hungry older children, limit the power of some teachers, and stream line the internal operation of the school. When I bring a problem to the meeting for the group to solve I sometimes say,"here's the problem and this is the solution that I would like voted in"; other times I say,"here's a problem, we must do something about it. ...what should be done?" Other teachers who are present at meetings also have power because they are adults, and students respect their opinions and voting habits, if the adult has earned that respect. Adults in meeting do not always vote the same way; however we do avoid knock out arguments between teachers at meetings.

I think it is clear that the power of adults in the meetings must be handled very carefully, and with continual evaluation. If they revoke all power and responsibility then the verbal, vocal

older students take dictatorial control of the meeting - and by extention the school - and all others have nc power and no freedom. The reverse situation - that of the teachers totally controlling the meeting - is just as dictatorial and just as bad. Another negative element that we had to deal with in our meetings was a parent who tried to make the students ~~concerned about~~ evaluate their motivation for passing rules, vis. "are you passing a rule because you are mad at someone, and if so, evaluate why you are angry at the person; but don't make a rule to limit someone's behavior". This really confused the idea of rules, and made students feel guilty when they were annoyed by other students. Students solved this problem by voting all parents out of student meetings. The distinct ion between punishment and enforcement of rules also produces problems, both with students and teachers. Enforcement of rules are mechanisms to limit a student if he/she goes against ~~one~~ a rule, vis. staying inside if he/she has thrown something outside; punishment is a mechanism that is designed to make someone feel bad about what they have done. It is difficult for adults and children to understand this distinction, and much time must continually be taken to do so.

New students must be coaxed into bringing their problems to the meetings, instead of taking them to a teacher or phoning their mother. Teachers must refuse to intervene in problems, and should encourage students to bring their problems to the meeting, or to call a special meeting. And teachers must continually fend off strong pressure from parents (especially new ones) who demand that they solve student problems. It takes much time and energy to always take problems and confrontations to the students to deal with; one is often tempted to solve the problems oneself. But for the PACER philosophy to work, the students must be able to discuss and resolve problems that are important to the ongoing operation of the school in a non threatening meeting.

Sometimes a student will refuse to attend a student meeting. This is handled by that student being subject to rules passed ~~at~~ anyway, and by the student not being able to go on any activities that involved a role call at the meeting he/she missed.

The strength of rules passed by students depends on whether they enforce their rules. Again they must be helped to do this by the staff. Sometimes a rule that is not enforced is a bad rule, and should therefore be voted out.

On occasion the enforcement of rules becomes a game, rather than a means of ensuring a social environment. For example, students at our school were concerned about students and parents who would sit in their jobs and make it difficult for them to work, so a rule was passed stating that everyone who stayed in a job area (say art room) beyond the count of 10 would have to help with that job. As soon as this rule was passed some students would count to ten as fast as possible whenever some one happened to step into their job area, regardless of why the person was there. Objections to this by many of the students, and lengthly discussions about the difference between the use of a rule as a guide, and the use of a rule as a means to trap some one into doing something they do not wish to do, slowly lead to a reasonable use of the rule. Some of the younger students still do not know the difference, however, because the concept of a rule as a guide is quite sophisticated. Some students occasionally try to trap students they do not like into disobaying a rule, and then they slap on the enforcer. Again this is using a rule for purposes other than what it was passed for, and the students must be helped to understand this.

Many people argue that 5 to 12 year olds are not sufficiently developed to understand the concepts that are needed for self governance, and that they do not have the attention span needed for the meetings that are required in the student government process. From my experience working with this age group for five years I know that, given the right kind of adult guidance, and given other important factors (such as 30 children, a good age distribution, not too rapid a change over of students etc) students can effectively run their own school. Of course the older children do contribute more to the meeting than do the younger children, but the five year olds do bring complaints to the meeting, and they do suggest solutions to problems - some ridiculus, like Aaron's suggestion that Mark not be allowed to use the bathroom for the rest of the day because he left it in a mess. The younger students also know when

a vote is passed that will affect them; and they are very vocal in enforcing all the rules, regardless of the age or status of the transgressor. Both the younger and older students will pursue issues and solutions in meetings for a great length of time - usually long after I have become bored and restless.

With a module of 25 to 30 students it is necessary to have one meeting almost every day. If we miss meetings for a couple of days in a row then the next meeting is usually very long, because there are many issues that must be resolved. The student makeup of the meeting should vary in age, so that younger children can learn from the older ones, and the older students can take some responsibility. The age distribution, from 5 to 12 years old, should be equally spaced. It is clear from all the meetings I have attended that the younger students do learn how to function at a meeting by imitating the older students and adults; it is also clear that the older students learn to be responsive and sensative to the needs of their younger comrades. For a 12 year old to have to listen to a 5 year old is important; for a 5 year old to have the attention of a 12 year old is also important. As I pointed out earlier in this paper some meetings are held in two separate age groups. We tried this idea a few times and then the students voted to meet in these groups once or twice a week. The main function of having 2 groups is to enable us to cover material that is relevant to a specific age group - certain material is too complex for younger students to understand, while other material is boring for the older students. Also the older students at PACER school bear a heavy responsibility in keeping the school on track, so many of the older students' meetings are spent in discussing the ramifications of that responsibility.

There always comes a point in decision making when the idea is taken too far, and students wish to make rules governing every aspect of behavior. At that point a suggestion that rules are just guidelines, and that one has to rely on the basic decency of people, is given, and then students usually comment that they feel there are just too many rules. So some rules are voted out.

Another conceptual discussion that usually transpires - usually with the older students - is the difference between guidelines

and laws - that rules can be broken for a good reason. This is a complex concept, but it comes up anyway.

The fact that students control their school through democratic meetings should not be construed to mean that I (head teacher) revoke all responsibility as an experienced adult charged with a specific job (teacher). I make many small on the spot decisions - usually within the spirit of a rule; I make decisions where no rule exists - and if a student complains about my decision I tell him to bring the complaint to the next meeting; and I will enforce a rule if no one else is around to enforce it. Because the rule is theirs the students do not object to me reminding them..I also often discourage a child (usually a younger student) from attempting to call a meeting over a small issue that can easily be resolved without the involvement of the whole group. Some younger students would call meetings over every small issue if they could.

Examples of rules that our students currently have on the book are: no smoking, with a $1 fine for those who do; no swearing, except in the wood shop; no throwing; a student must use a room for its specific function -viz. art in the art room - if they cannot they are asked to leave the room for the rest of the day; answer the phone with your name first; clean up after yourself; no running down the stairs; no one can carry matches; if someone is disruptive during a field trip, he/she cannot go on the next trip. Remember, these rules apply to everyone who walks into the school.

Students can vote that a member of the school stay at home for a given number of days, if the child is being disruptive to the school environment. Some people argue that this is an impractic al rule - that parents often cannot be at home with their children, and that the school should be able to deal with its own problems at school. We realize that in many schools and day care situations it would be impossible to send a child home; but so far we have been able to have someone cover the child when they were asked to stay at home. The rule has been very effective in changing a child's behavior at school. This is the ultimate example of collective student power in the FACER Model; but the teachers can also ask a student to leave for a few days, because ultimately the staff must deal with disruptive students - because the other students

do not know how to handle these children, and because the staff can request that a student never come back to a school. We feel very comfortable in asking a student to stay at home if he/she cannot function within the framework defined by the total school community - either for a few days, or permanantly. A free school tends to attract many disruptive students (for various reasons) and a small free school cannot possibly offer a good learning experience to all students who apply. For children to have real control of their school they must have the power to dismiss students and adults whom they cannot pursuade to function reasonably within the school environment. Theoretically students can vote adults out of the school; but this has never happened. What has happened is that students do not respond to adults who do not function within the framework of the school, so the adults eventually leave.

The major purpose, of course, of students having such extreme control over their school is so they learn to take responsibility for the school's physical, emotional and learning environments, so they learn to take responsibility for their own growth and learning, and so they learn to make choices and decisions that affect their lives and those of their comrades. Too often today one hears people exclaim that they have no control over their lives - their job, family, government, environment and happiness. We are trying to change that.

Summary. It must be stressed that for the PACER Model to work all the above mentioned aspects of student control and the school meeting must be followed carefully. To alter any one area will destroy the entire concept. For example, the comparetively small action of raising ones hand until called upon by the group leader in a school meeting is very important, and came about after years of trying other methods. It guarentees that all members of the school community will be heard, which is paramount for the system to run successfully. It is very easy, and tempting, to dent this rule by having a fine benevolent teacher feel exempt from it (we have had this happen), and feel that it really makes little difference. But it does! Size and regularity of meetings, a good age distribution, a non authoritarian head teacher, rotation of student

leaders, and an unlimited time for meetings are all equally important for student control to work. Altering any of these aspects will in some way negatively affect the total concept of student control. The school meeting is the heart of student control in the PACER Model - if it does not function, then the school will not be free.